

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 295

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGUI 1282

LIMDIS

TEHRAN FOR FAIRCHILD

T.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PINS, CT, US

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S RETROSPECTIVE PART 3: US-CAE RELATIONS --
THE ROLLER COASTER

1. GIVEN THE NATURE OF BOKASAA'S RULE (BANGUI 1270) AND THE
UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY (BANGUI
1281), THE QUESTION ARISES OF HOW FAR AND IN WHAT WAYS THE USG
SHOULD INVOLVE ITSELF IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE EMPIRE.

2. LOOKING BACK OVER MY EXPERIENCE IN BANGUI, I AM STRUCK BY
THE INSTABILITY OF THE GOCAE'S PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UNITED
STATES. PERIODS OF DEEP SUSPICION HAVE ALTERNATED WITH EFFUSIVE
FRIENDSHIP. I ARRIVED AT ONE OF THE LOW POINTS -- THE EMBASSY'S
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LOCAL GSO HAVING BEEN EXECUTED IN A COUP PLOT. I AM LEAVING ON
ONE OF THE HIGHS. IN BETWEEN AT ROUGHLY SIX MONTHLY INTERVALS,
RELATIONS HAVE OSCILLATED. WARM FOR THE BUCHANAN VISIT, AIDS AZ,
TREASURES OF SPACE, SCOOOL WHEN THE SCRANTON VISIT WAS CANCELLED,
FRIGID WITH THE JOURNALISTS' INCIDENT, COOL AGAIN AFTER USG
PRESS COMMENTARY ON THE CBRONATION. DESPITE THE RHETORICAL
ROLLER COASTER AND PROFOUND DIFFERENCES OVER HUMAN RIGHTS,

THE UNDERLYING RELATIONSHIPS IN TERMS OF OUR PROGRAMS HAS BEEN REMARKABLY STABLE.

3. OVER THE LAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS USG ACTIVITY IN THE CAE HAS INCREASED. FIVE AID PROGRAMS HAVE GOTTEN UNDERWAY (WITH FOUR CONTRACT TECHNICIANS ASSIGNED TO THEM), THE NUMBER OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS HAS DOUBLED, AND OUR CULTURAL AND INFORMATION PROGRAMS HAVE TAKEN ON A NEW RANGE OF ACTIVITIES. MORE CENTRAL AFRICANS THAN EVER BEFORE ARE VISITING THE US UNDER OUR AUSPICES OR ARE PARTICIPATING IN PROGRAMS WHICH WE SPONSOR IN-COUNTRY.

4. IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT THE RESULTS OF THIS ACTIVITY HAVE BEEN MIXED. BOTH AID AND PEACE CORPS PROGRAMS ARE PLAGUED WITH PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY WHEN COUNTERPART INPUTS ARE INVOLVED. WHILE THE GOCAE USUALLY MEETS ITS OBLIGATION TO HOUSE OUR PERSONNEL, ITS OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS ARE MEAGRE. NONETHELESS, THERE IS A SHARED CONVICTION AMONG ALMOST ALL AMERICANS WHO WORK IN THE RURAL AREAS OF THE CAE THAT POSITIVE RESULTS CAN BE ACHIEVED TO THE EXTENT THAT OUR EFFORTS ARE DIRECTED TO THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES AND DO NOT RELY UNDULY ON GOCAE INPUTS. THE DIGGING OF WELLS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF FISH CULTURE, THE PROMOTION OF BASIC HEALTH SERVICES THROUGH VILLAGE COMMITTEES ARE ALL MAKING THEIR MARK AND ARE MEETING THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN PEOPLE. IN MY VIEW, THEY SHOULD BE CONTINUED AND FOLLOW-ON PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED LOOKING TOWARD

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A RESUMPTION OF SOME NEW AID ACTIVITY IN FY-1980. WE SHOULD, HOWEVER, INSIST TO THE GOCAE MINISTRIES CONCERNED THAT OUR DECISIONS WILL DEPEND IN SIGNIFICANT DEGREE ON THE CAE'S PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORTING OUR PROJECTS. THEIR COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS SHOULD BE THE ESSENTIAL CRITERION FOR FUTURE AID, SINCE WE ARE UNABLE, GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE EMPEROR AND HIS STYLE OF GOVERNMENT, TO DO MUCH WITH REGARD TO POLITICAL RIGHTS.

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5. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT WE SHOULD IGNORE POLITICAL RIGHTS. WE MUST CONTINUE TO USE OUR LIMITED INFLUENCE, AND THE GOCAE'S NEED FOR OUR SUPPORT, TO ENCOURAGE A GREATER AWARENESS OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON, BETTER PROTECTION FOR OUR CITIZENS (A CONSULAR CONVENTION), AND A LIBERALIZATION OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. WE WILL, HOWEVER, BE EFFECTIVE ONLY ON THE MARGINS.

6. IN VIEW OF THE LIKELY UPS AND DOWNS IN OUR RELATIONS IN THE YEARS TO COME WE SHOULD DEVISE A STRATEGY WHICH IS RELATIVELY IMMUNE TO SHORT TERM SHOCKS AND WHICH BUILDS FOR THE LONGER TERM. A HUMAN NEEDS FOCUS FOR AID AND PEACE CORPS IS ONE OBVIOUS ELEMENT. ANOTHER ELEMENT SHOULD BE TRAINING OF CENTRAL AFRICAN

MANPOWER. THE CAE IS ONE OF THE POOREST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD
IN TERMS OF TRAINED PERSONNEL. TO BE SURE THE NUMBER OF HIGH
SCHOOL GRADUATES HAS RISEN FROM 40 PER ANNUM AT INDEPENDENCE
TO 400 NOW, AND
THE FIRST HANDFUL OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES ARE
BEING PRODUCED LOCALLY, BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE LEVEL
OF OVERALL COMPETENCE IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS IS
LOW. WE SHOULD SUBSTANTIALLY EXPAND OUR TRAINING EFFORTS AND
RE-ESTABLISH A CAE COMPONENT IN AID'S AFRICAN MANPOWER DEVELOP-
MENT PROJECT. WE SHOULD ALSO EXPAND AS FAR AS POSSIBLE ICA GRANTS
OF VARIOUS KINDS WHICH PROVIDE CENTRAL AFRICANS WITH DIRECT
EXPERIENCE OF AMERICAN VALUES. WE MUST STRIVE CONSCIOUSLY TO
REACH THE NEXT GENERATION OF CENTRAL AFRICAN LEADERS, WAITING
FOR THE DAY WHEN BOKASSA'S IDIOSYNCRATIC REGIME IS A THING OF
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THE PAST.

7. THE VIRTUAL BANKRUPTCY OF THE COUNTRY, LARGELY AS A RESULT
OF THE EMPEROR'S OWN EXTRAVAGANCES, HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR TWO
LONGSTANDING ECONOMIC ISSUES: REPAYMENT OF THE EX-IM BANK'S
CREDIT AND COMPENSATION FOR OUR NATIONALIZED OIL COUNTRIES.
EVEN IF IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS A RESCHEDULING AGREEMENT IS
SIGNED FOR THE GT&E/EX-IM CREDIT, AND IF A COMPENSATION AGREE-

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGUI 1282

LIMDIS

TEHRAN FOR FAIRCHILD

MENT WITH TEXACO AND MOBIL IS ACHIEVED, WE CAN NOT REALISTICALLY EXPECT THESE AGREEMENTS TO BE HONORED IN FULL. THERE IS SIMPLY NO MONEY IN THE TILL, AND ALL WE CAN HOPE FOR ARE PARTIAL PAYMENTS GRUDGINGLY DOLED OUT AFTER REPEATED PRODDING BOTH HERE AND IN WASHINGTON.

8. AT THE MOMENT IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT WE HAVE THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO DO THESE MANY JOBS. THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT IN THE EMPIRE IS SUFFICIENTLY COMPLEX THAT ALL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS REQUIRE CLOSE SUPERVISION. THE EMBASSY'S SKELETON STAFF HAS HAD IN THE LAST TWO YEARS TO CARRY THE BURDEN OF BEING AID MISSION AND INFORMATION SECTION AS WELL AS THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ARMS OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY. IF WE ARE TO HAVE THE STEADY AND WELL-FOCUSSED PROGRAMS WHICH OUR INTERESTS AND THE
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LOCAL SITUATION DICTATE AND IF WE ARE TO REACH OUT MORE EFFECTIVELY BEYOND BOKASSA TO THE PEOPLE OF THE CAE, WE NEED BOTH A PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER AND AN AID PROGRAM OFFICER IN BANGUI. WITHOUT THEM WE CAN STRUGGLE ON BUT ONLY AS A TRIUMPH OF IMPROVISATION OVER SOUND ADMINISTRATION.
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